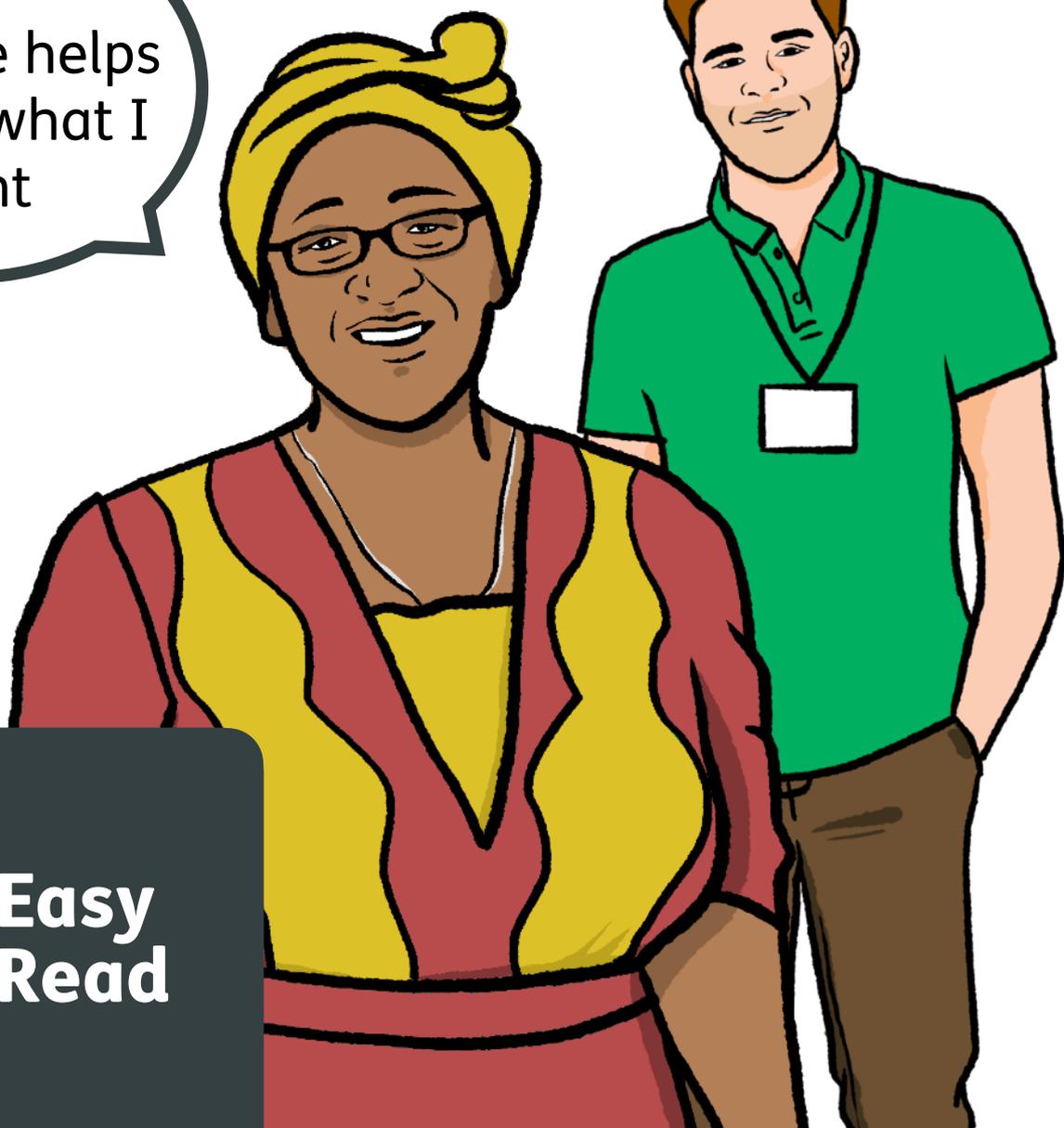


Guideline for advocacy services for adults with health and social care needs

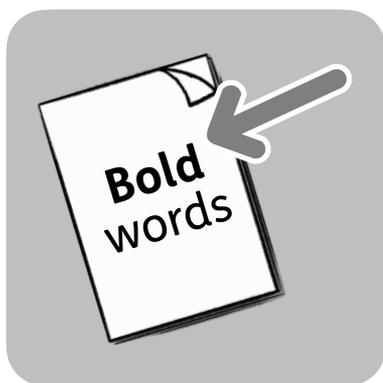
My
advocate helps
me say what I
want



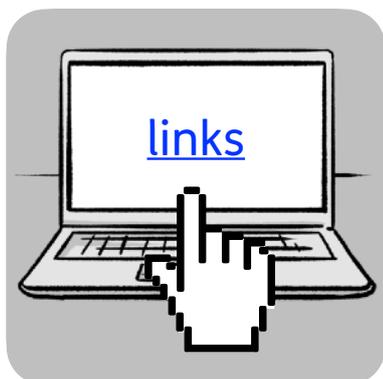
**Easy
Read**

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In this Easy Read document, hard words are in **bold**. We explain what these words mean in the sentence after we have used them.



Some words are [blue and underlined](#). These are links that will go to another website which has more information.

Introduction



The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has written this guideline to explain how **advocacy services** should be run.



Advocacy services help you to:

- Speak up, or speak up on your behalf.



- Make a decision.



- Find the services you need.

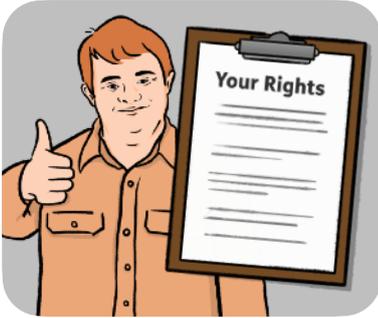


- Check if local councils and health services are doing things in the right way.



Advocacy services also help you to:

- Stay safe.



- Get your rights - these are the things the law says you should have, like the right to be treated fairly and with respect.



Advocacy services are independent. They work for you, not the local council or any other services.

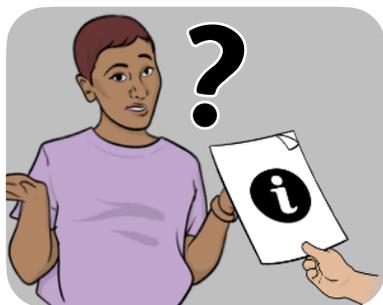


This guideline is about advocacy given by people who have been trained.



Someone that gives you advocacy is called an advocate.

The law



The law says that the local council and health services must help you to get an independent advocate if:

- The information they give you is difficult to understand.



- The information they give you isn't easy to remember.



- It is not always easy to make decisions.



- It is not always easy saying what you want.



You may also get an advocate if you have a serious mental health condition.

Information about advocacy



Local councils and health services should give you information about:

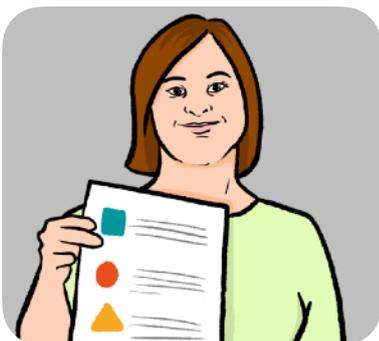
- Local advocacy services.



- How advocacy could help you.



- How to get an advocate.



The information should be given in a way that you understand. This could be using sign language, braille or Easy Read.



Local councils and health services should remind you that you could have an advocate every time they have meetings with you.



If you are offered care or support away from the area where you live, you should be told about advocacy services in that area.



Independent Mental Health Advocates (IMHA)

Independent Mental Health Advocates (IMHAs) have been trained to help people with a mental health condition.



People with a mental health condition must be offered an advocate when they first get in touch with mental health services.



IMHAs should visit mental health hospitals to see if anyone needs an advocacy service.



Independent Mental Capacity Advocates (IMCA)

Independent Mental Capacity Advocates (IMCAs) have been trained to help people who cannot make decisions for themselves.



Health services must ask an IMCA before giving a person serious treatment, or moving them into a hospital or care home, if:

- They cannot make decisions for themselves.
- They do not have anyone else to support them.

Making it easier to get an advocate



Local councils and health services should make it easy for you to get an advocacy service by:



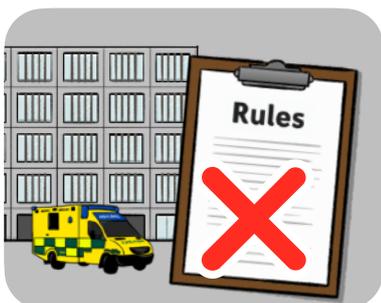
- Setting up an easy way for you to find the right advocacy service for you.



- Letting you contact the advocacy services yourself, if you want to.



The first time that you get in touch with an advocacy service, you should be able to talk to someone face-to-face.



There should not be rules that stop you using an advocacy service in a hospital, care home or prison.

People with a mental health condition should be given information about:



- Organisations that can help and support people with a mental health condition.



- Organisations run by people with a mental health condition.



- Self-advocacy groups - these are groups of people who have experience of mental health conditions and help each other to speak up.



- Meetings where patients talk about the health services that they have been getting.



- Peer advocacy schemes - this is when you are given 1-to-1 support from an advocate who has had the same experience or condition as you.



Advocacy organisations should have a plan to make more people aware of their services, especially those people who need an advocate.

Making advocacy happen

Health and care workers should:



- Try and recognise when someone may need an advocate.



- Help people to get an advocacy service.



They should allow enough time for you to find an advocate, or an **interpreter** if you need one.



An **interpreter** is someone who can change what someone is saying into a language you understand. This could either be a spoken language or sign language.



You will need some time to get to know your advocate.



You should be able to talk to your advocate in private when you want to.



Health and care staff should involve you and your advocate when decisions are being made about your care and support.

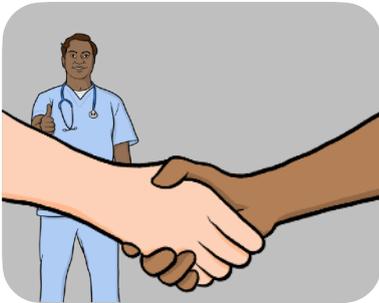


Health and care staff should:

- Help you to understand about advocacy.



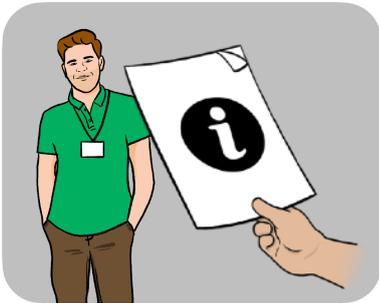
- Help you to communicate with your advocate.



- Help you to have a good relationship with your advocate.



- Remember that the advocate is independent and working just for you.



- Share information with the advocate at the right time.



- Let you talk in private with your advocate.



Health and care services should help you to communicate with your advocate. This might be:

- By phone.



- Using a computer.



They should help you to remember about meetings with your advocate.

Keeping you safe



Advocacy services should help to keep you safe by:

- Having rules about what staff do if someone is suffering from **abuse** or is not safe.

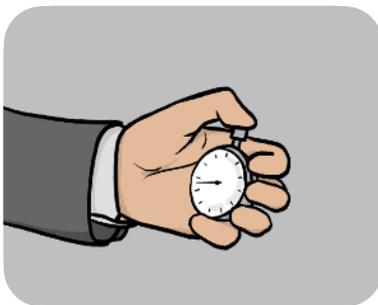
Abuse is when someone hurts you or treats you badly.



- Keeping information about you safe and private.



- Having someone who is in charge of keeping people safe.



- Dealing with reports of abuse quickly.



- Training staff so they know what to do if someone is suffering from abuse or is not safe.

Advocacy that works



Advocacy services should:

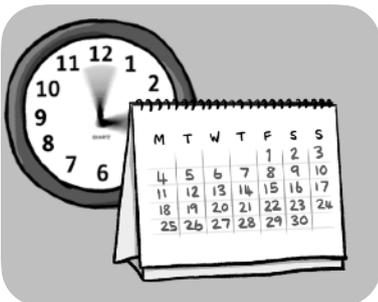
- Meet with you face-to-face.



- Communicate with you in a way that is good for you.



- Give their service for free to people who need it.



- Be available when you need them, if it is possible for them.



- Make it easy to use their service.



Non-instructed advocacy

Non-instructed advocacy is for people who have difficulty communicating for themselves.



The advocate has to find ways to understand what the person wants.



They have to say what they think the person would want them to say.



Advocacy services should train staff in how to do non-instructed advocacy.

Right for you

Advocates should:



- Accept what you want.



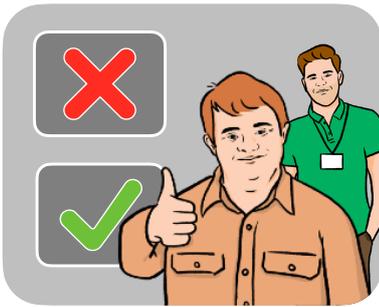
- Treat you with respect and dignity.



- Help you to speak up and say what you want as much as you can.



- Let you be involved in meetings as much as you want.



- Help you to make decisions for yourself.



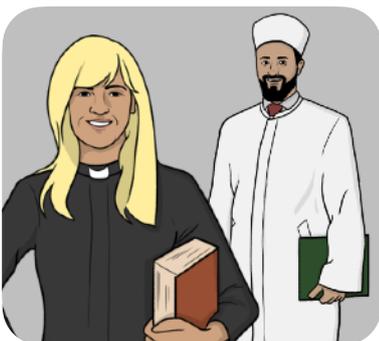
- Help you to say how you want the advocacy service to help you.



- Only have any contact with health and care services if you want them to.



- Be able to help you if you do not speak English as your main language.



- Respect your religion, beliefs and culture.



- Keep up to date with regular training.



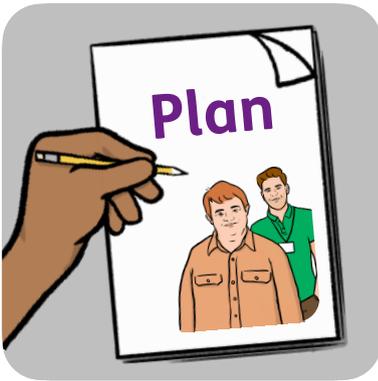
- Keep what you say private.



- Be in touch with your friends and family if you want.

Planning advocacy services

Local councils and health services should:



- Write a long-term plan for advocacy services in their area.



- Involve people who use services when they plan new advocacy services.

Training for advocates

Advocacy services should train their advocates so they know about:



- Any services that are available to people in their local area.



- How to work with people in a way that is right for the person.



- Working with people from different groups and backgrounds.



- How people can make complaints about their services, and what happens if someone complains.



- How to do non-instructed advocacy.



Advocates should complete the National Qualification in Independent Advocacy. This is a certificate that shows that you understand how to be a good advocate.

For more information

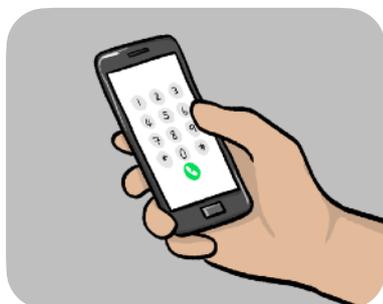


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www.nice.org.uk



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